

VLR: 12-11-91
NRHP: 8-24-92

* SEE ALSO
#127-845
RICHMOND
PUBLIC SCHOOLS
MPD

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name JOHN B. CARY SCHOOL
other names/site number DIR File No. 127-824
West End School

2. Location

street & number 2100 Idlewood Avenue N/A not for publication
city, town Richmond N/A vicinity
state Virginia code VA county City of Richmond code 760 zip code 23220

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
Public Schools of Richmond, Virginia, 1869-1930

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

[Signature]
Signature of certifying official

6 July 1992
Date

Director, Virginia Department of Historic Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain)

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION: School

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS:

Late Gothic Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls STONE: Granite

roof ASPHALT

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1912-1930

Significant Dates

1912

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Robinson, Charles M.; Architect

Wise Granite Company; Builder

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

Virginia Dept. of Historic Resources
221 Governor St., Richmond, VA 23219

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 2.1 acres

UTM References

A

1	8	2	8	1	8	3	0	4	1	5	8	2	1	0
Zone	Easting				Northing									

B

Zone	Easting				Northing									

C

Zone	Easting				Northing									

D

Zone	Easting				Northing									

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Paul L. Weaver, III, Senior Consultant
organization Historic Property Associates date October 31, 1991
street & number P. O. Box 1002 telephone 904-824-5178
city or town St. Augustine state Florida zip code 32085

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Section number 7 Page 1 John B. Cary School, Richmond, Virginia

SUMMARY

The Cary School, subsequently named the West End School, is a two-and-one half story, granite faced educational facility, with a raised basement. It is located at 2100 Idlewood Avenue. Constructed in 1913, it is an outstanding example of the Gothic Revival style. Although in fair condition, it is little altered since originally constructed.

PRESENT AND ORIGINAL PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Cary School is located in the West End of Richmond on the east half of a rectangular block. The block is 2.1 acres in area and is bounded by Idlewood, Grayland, and Shields avenues, and Rowland Street. Beyond the school is an asphalt parking lot and playground. Most of the surrounding area is a residential neighborhood.

The Cary School has a rectangular ground plan. It rests on a poured concrete slab foundation. Its structural system is reinforced concrete. Perhaps its most unusual and significant feature is its granite exterior finish. The roof is a built-up type with a crenelated parapet. A secondary hipped roof, sheathed in metal, covers the gymnasium. The fenestration of the building is regular. It is composed primarily of awning windows with 2/2 lights. Windows are arranged in groups of four in the classroom areas. The interior of the building includes a basement, principals office, classrooms, and a multi-use space housing primarily a gymnasium.

The main entrance fronts on Idlewild Avenue and is part of a projecting central pavilion. The entrance contains much of the ornamentation and stylistic features of the building. The exterior entrance is defined by a tudor arched opening. It is flanked by two full height towers. Each tower features apertures and a crenelated parapet, additional elements of the Gothic style. The entrance foyer also contains features associated with the Gothic Revival style.

The Cary School is a good example of the versatility of standard school building design. The Gothic Revival styling enhances the architectural quality of the school, and the use of granite on an institutional building is rare. However, the overall design and individual features of the building--

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the basic classroom size, expansive windows, high ceilings, and an open setting with adjacent playgrounds--were shared by schools ranging from one-room rural types to large urban schools.

The Cary School is currently vacant and in fair condition. It is largely unaltered since originally constructed. Plans are under way for adaptation of the building as an apartment building.

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SUMMARY

The Cary School appears eligible for listing in the National Register under Criteria A and C. It is eligible under Criterion A for its association with an important period of development in the history of the Richmond Public School system. It is further eligible under Criterion C for its association with one of most important Virginia architects of the early twentieth century, its architectural style, the construction material used on its exterior, and the type of property it embodies.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Cary School was named for Colonel John B. Cary, Superintendent of the Richmond Public Schools from 1886 to 1889. Constructed between 1912-1913, it replaced the Sidney School. It was renamed West End in September 1954, when it became a school for black students.

The Cary School is associated with an important period in the history of public education in Richmond. Between 1870, when the Board of Public Instruction launched its initial acquisition and development program, and 1909, capital outlay for school construction was modest. In 1909, Dr. J.A.C. Chandler was named Superintendent of Richmond Public Schools. Dr. Chandler soon initiated an ambitious construction program which was overseen by Public School Architect Charles M. Robinson. Over the next twenty years most of the extant historic school buildings in Richmond were constructed. The Cary School is one of the best examples of the schools constructed during this period. The Depression of the 1930s and World War II effectively ended school construction in Richmond. Not until after the war were schools constructed on a scale comparable to the 1909-1929 period.

The Cary School was designed by Charles M. Robinson (1867-1932), a significant Virginia architect, particularly noted for his design of educational buildings. Robinson was born in Hamilton, Loudoun County, the son of James T. Robinson, also an architect. Robinson studied under D.S. Hopkins of Grand Rapids, Michigan, and John K. Peebles of Richmond. After practicing in Altoona and Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, Robinson returned to Richmond in 1906.

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Robinson was supervising architect for the Board of Public Instruction of the City of Richmond between 1910 and 1929. In addition to the Cary School, he designed the William Fox School, the Albert Hill School, and Thomas Jefferson School among others.

Robinson's design of educational facilities extended to the collegiate level. He prepared master plans for the campuses of James Madison and Radford universities and the College of William and Mary. He designed many buildings at the College of William and Mary, Mary Washington College, and Virginia State University. His campus planning for William and Mary, Mary Washington, Radford, and James Madison universities, his scholarly Georgian Revival designs, and his fluency in all styles and motifs earned him the respect of his peers and clients. In addition to his practice, Robinson served on the Virginia State Board for examination and Certification of Architects.

The Cary School was constructed by the Wise Granite Company of Richmond from locally quarried stone. It is a relatively rare example of the use of granite within the city of Richmond, where brick has been the most common masonry material. It is one of only two extant school buildings in Richmond which is extensively faced with granite. The use of granite was particularly appropriate to the Cary School because of its Gothic styling. The granite lends greater authenticity to the Gothic styling whose origins date to the Medieval period and are closely associated with the architecture of churches and fortifications.

Another aspect of the architectural significance of the Cary School is its Gothic Revival styling. During the 1830s the Gothic Revival became fashionable principally through the work of Alexander Jackson Davis, the country's most prolific practitioner of the style. Davis's plans for houses and cottages were widely distributed in the popular books of Andrew Jackson Downing. Downing produced several pattern books which illustrated the suitability of the style to modest domestic architecture. Downing's publications made the Gothic one of the predominant building styles of the period. The Gothic Revival style was most popular in the United States between 1840 and 1870, although it remained a popular building style for religious

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and educational buildings well into the 20th century.

The Gothic Revival was particularly important in Virginia, where Alexander Jackson Davis designed a number of buildings. The Barracks at Virginia Military Institute, designed by Davis, is the heart of a district unified by castellated examples of the style. Strikingly similar in detail, the Barracks was perhaps the inspiration for Charles Robinson's highly accurate Gothic Revival design of the Cary School.

Beyond its Gothic styling, the Cary School shares certain traits common to hundred of others found throughout the country. While historic school buildings varied greatly in terms of their size, style, and materials, their designs did adhere to certain standards. The earliest published standards for school buildings date to 1832 when William A. Alcott prepared a brief treatise on school design. Alcott stressed that fresh air, space, and light were necessary in promoting a healthy learning environment. He suggested the liberal use of large windows, classrooms providing a separate desk for each pupil, and open surroundings for recreation. For more than a century afterwards, school architects followed similar standards. These schools featured a basic classroom size of about 25 by 35 feet, expansive windows, high ceilings, and an open setting usually with adjacent playgrounds and athletic fields. These characteristics were shared by schools ranging from one-room rural types to large urban schools. The Cary School shares many of these traits and is a good example of the adaptation of the Gothic style to traditional school design.

The Cary School appears eligible for listing in the National Register under Criteria A and C. It is associated with a significant period of development and a prominent Virginia architect. It embodies an important architectural style and building type, and is a rare example in Richmond of the use of granite as a construction material.

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Miscellaneous Sources

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Carneal.

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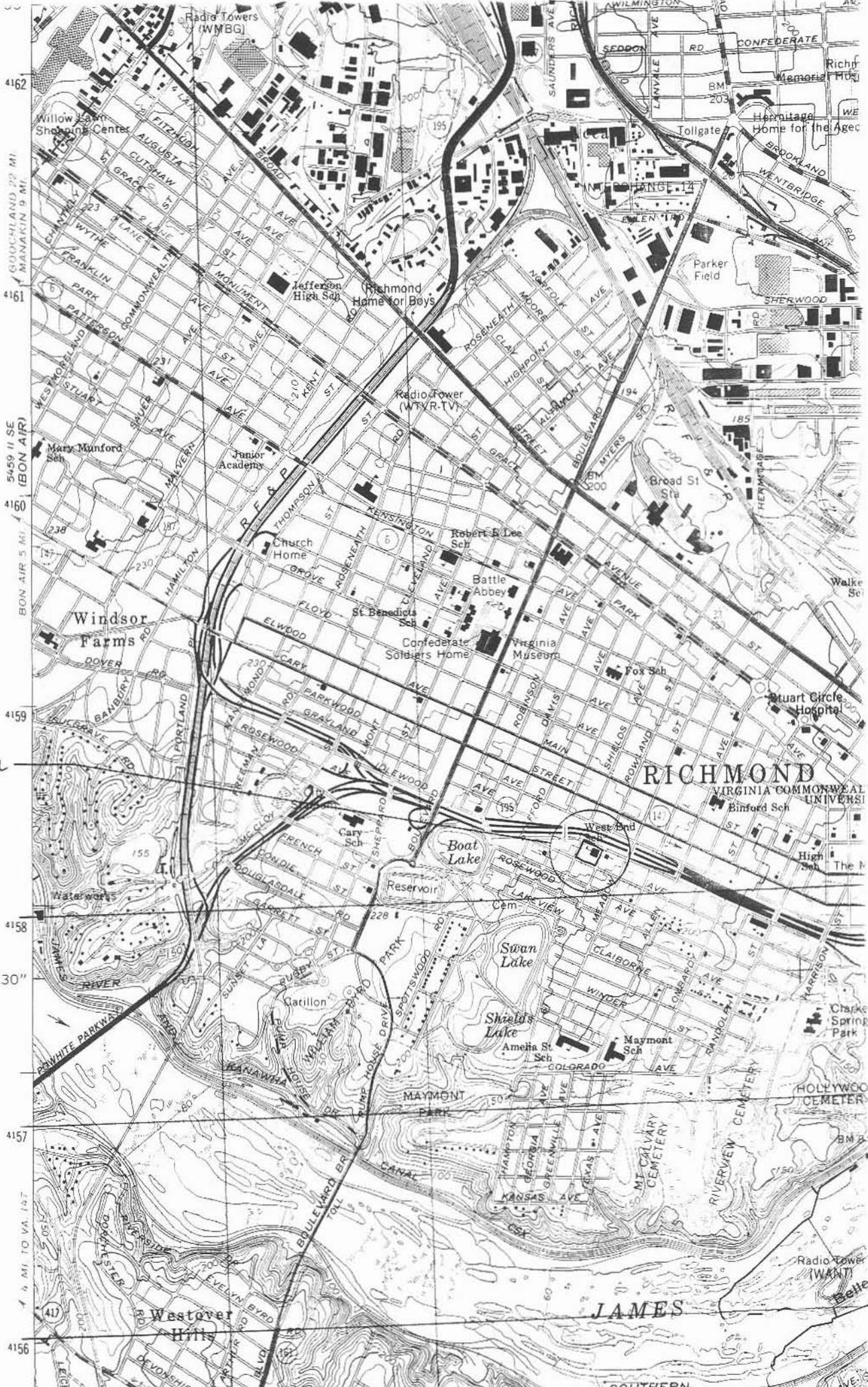
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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

BEGINNING at the point of intersection of the south right-of-way line of Grayland Avenue and the east right-of-way line of South Rowland Street; thence in a southwesterly direction 258.50 feet, more or less, along the west right-of-way line of South Rowland Avenue to the point of intersection of the north right-of-way line of Idlewood Avenue; thence in a northwesterly direction 341.50 feet, more or less, along the north right-of-way line of Idlewood Avenue to the point of intersection of the east right-of-way line of South Shields Avenue; thence in a northeasterly direction 258.62 feet, more or less, along the east right-of-way line of South Shields Avenue to the point of intersection of the south right-of-way line of Grayland Avenue; thence in a southeasterly direction along the south right-of-way line of Grayland Avenue 341.49 feet, more or less, to the point of BEGINNING, and as shown shaded on Department of Public Works Drawing No. N-21964, dated May 18, 1989, on file in the Bureau of Engineering, Department of Public Works of the City of Richmond and a copy of which is attached to the draft of Ordinance No. 89-159-324 on file in the office of the City Clerk. Said property is more particularly described on that certain plat of survey by Fred A. Gibson & Associate dated October 30, 1990 reference to which plat is hereby made.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary is justified under the National Register Criteria in that it contains all the significant resources historically associated with the property.



JOHN B. CARY SCHOOL
 CITY OF RICHMOND, VA
 UTM REFERENCE :
 18|281830|4158210